

Proposed 2010 Crow Containment Plan Terre Haute, Indiana



Background

- For at least twenty years, Terre Haute has been plagued with crows roosting at night in our downtown area and additional sites across the City.
- In the last few years the winter crow population has grown to an estimated 50,000.
- The birds leave behind droppings that cover buildings, sidewalks, and cars. At a minimum, this is a nuisance.
- The Vigo County Health Department maintains that this is not a health hazard.

Background

- Until this spring, no one group or elected official has proposed a comprehensive plan to deal with the winter crows for the City.
- A Crows Committee formed last spring through the TREES organization in response to people cutting down trees to get rid of crows.
- Earlier this year, Mayor Duke Bennett encouraged the formation of a larger community based Crow Committee. Several of his staff members are on the committee, chaired by John Hancewicz, Director of the Vigo County Purdue Extension Office.
- The group was enlarged to include the most interested people and groups in Vigo County.

Crow Control in Other Cities

- Galesburg, Illinois
- Auburn, New York
- Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Galesburg, IL

17 Sq. Miles, Population 33K

- Their efforts started about 10 years ago
- The goal was to move the birds from the immediate downtown area
- They contracted with a service, Soules Wildlife (owner Steve Soules) for the first two years
- Soules worked during the night, and would NOT share specifics on how he accomplished his task
- The birds were successfully moved, but only a couple of blocks away
- At that point, the City took over and used a combination of pyro and lasers and also had another company try a fog, which didn't work
- Their problem is returning somewhat, and they have considered using Soules again
- Soules is not sure if they can do the work, but a price of \$60,000 was the estimate for the first year (the owner is nearly 90 years old)
- Once the birds are "trained", each subsequent year should be a little easier (and less costly) to get the same results
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife told the City that using pyro to "herd the birds" every night for several weeks would be the best approach

Auburn, NY

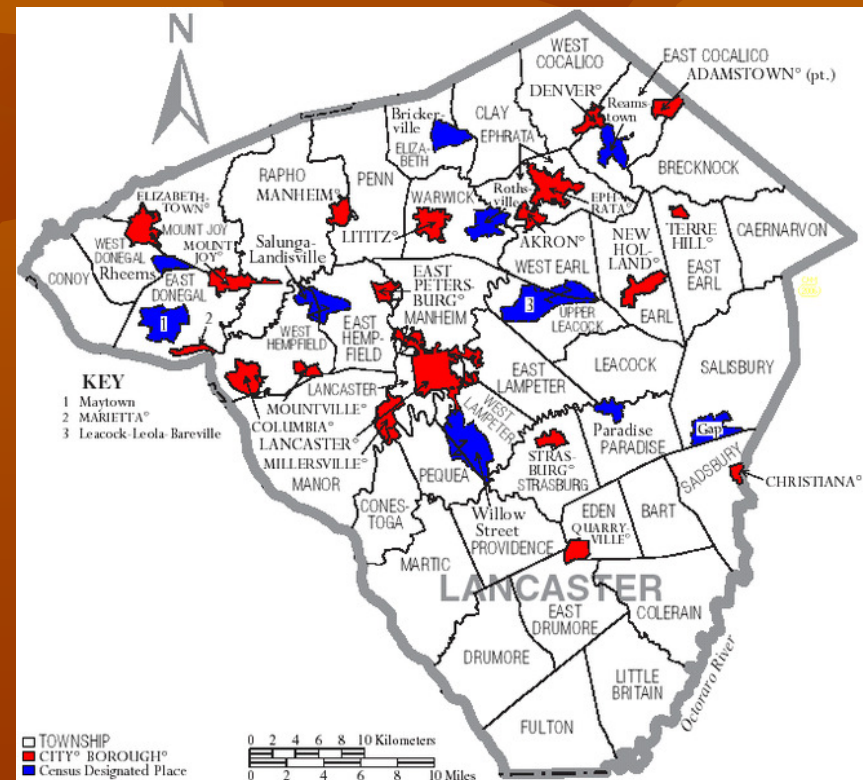
8.4 Sq. Miles, Population 28K

- City Works Department
- Areas of concern include downtown and the landfill
- Operation includes moving them out of those areas to roost locations that are 10 miles away
- Pyro is used (from handheld guns)
- Beginning in the fall, from 4pm-8pm and 4am-8am, 10 days in a row, 2-3 times
- City Works employees are responsible for this (Street Department, Parks, etc.)
- Margo Supply from Canada supplies the pyro; approximately \$500 per year after guns are purchased, plus manpower

Lancaster, PA

7.4 Sq. Miles, Population 55K (Urban) 494K (Metro)

- Lancaster Crow Coalition – original makeup was four municipalities
- Records show crow populations back to the 1800's
- Combination of pyro and effigies, perhaps cannons
- Cost is about \$500 to \$1000 per year, plus manpower



Terre Haute Crow Response Committee Progression

- Dialogue between city officials and concerned citizens
- List of subject matter experts and concerned stakeholders
- Two public meetings were held
- Planning committee meetings held
- Lancaster plan adopted
- Dialogue with Lancaster Crow Coalition
- Initial Crow Containment Plan produced



Proposed Crow Containment Plan

Winter 2010-2011

Initial Implementation Season

The ZONE Approach

- **ZERO TOLERANCE ZONES** are those places where crow roosts of any size are not acceptable.
- **MODERATE TOLERANCE ZONES** are those places where some crows – perhaps up to a few thousand crows – are acceptable.
- **FULL TOLERANCE ZONES** are those places where very large roosts can stay without bothering anyone.

The ZONE Approach

- Believe it or not, Vigo County contains plenty of places that crows can roost in large numbers without bothering anyone. The trick is getting them to go there when they don't choose those spots on their own. Many times, they choose good places all by themselves and don't require any redirection.
- You MUST designate some moderate and full-tolerance zones. Otherwise, you're not giving the crows you move out of zero-tolerance zones anywhere to go.
- Organization and planning are key to a successful program. Determine where they cannot be, decide where they can be, and focus all management on moving them toward the moderate and full –tolerance zones.

Terre Haute's Plan for Year #1

- Understand that this is a proposed plan based on information from previous years.
- It is limited in scope in order to achieve some level of success the first year.
- The Initial Focus Area includes both Zero and Moderate Tolerance Zones.
- The plan is to expand upon the first year's success in each subsequent year.

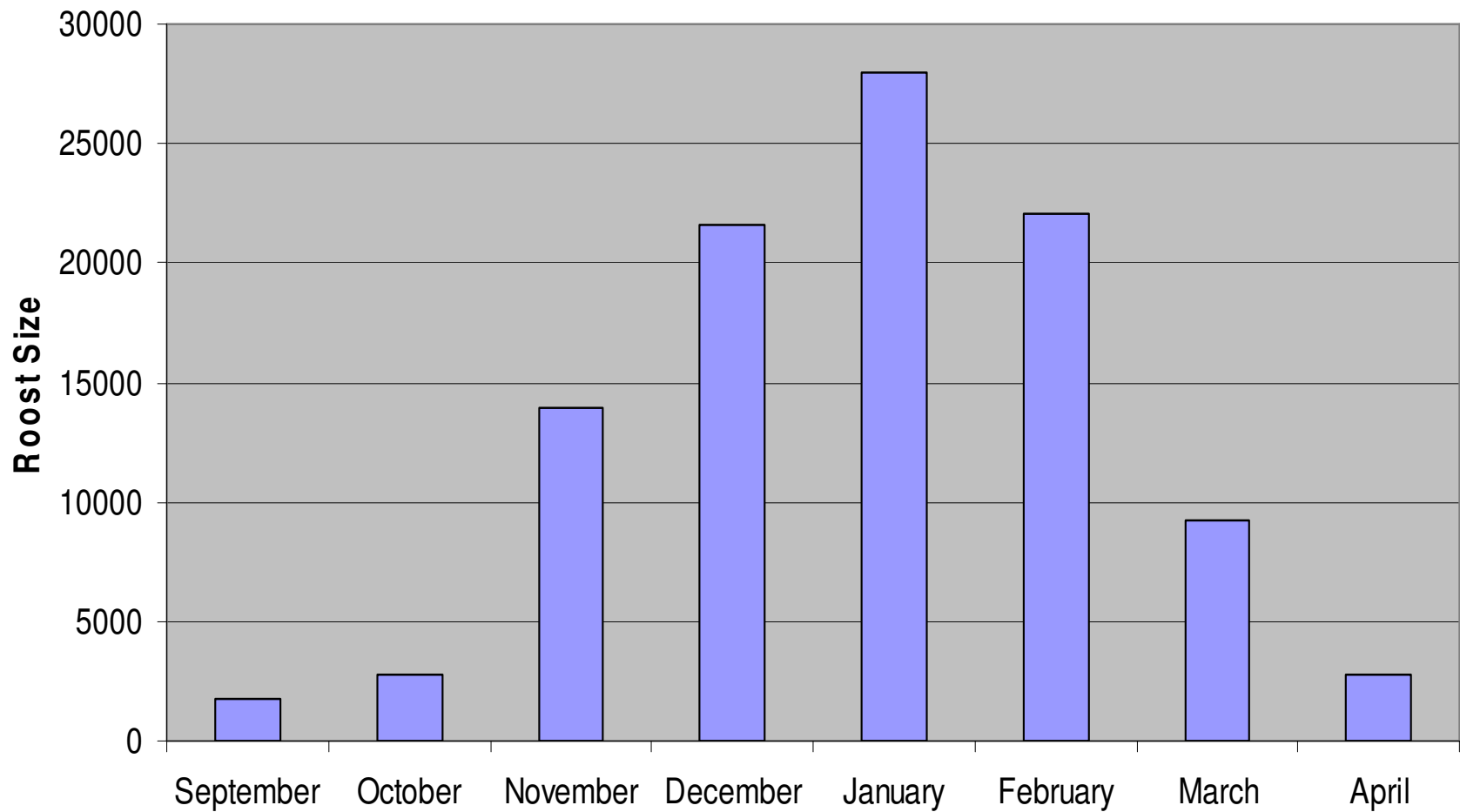
Overall Strategy

- Observing flight paths, staging areas and roost areas is key.
- Volunteer teams will work with two coordinators to “encourage” the crows to move to acceptable roosting areas.
- These periods of “encouragement” last only a short period of time in the early evening.
- **Managing Expectations - Educating the public is important.**
- Specific pyrotechnics will be used (Oct – Mar).

A scale bar labeled "MILES" with markings for 0, 1, and 2 miles.



Example of Migratory Crow Population



Financing This Effort

- Project launch and support through its first year:

\$6,000.00 - salary for the part-time Planning Director

\$6,000.00 - salary for the part-time Field Director

\$2,000.00 - for safety and pyrotechnics equipment

\$1,000.00 - for office expenses, postage, mileage for
two directors

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\$15,000.00 Sponsorships and/or grants required

The Public's Role

- **Accept that there will always be crows here.**
Between resident crows who live here year-round and the migratory birds who'll always be drawn to this area, we will always have crows.
- **Realize that small groups of crows are not going to do any damage, and aren't a "roost".**
- **Only roosting behavior – where they choose to gather overnight – can be changed.**

The Public's Role

- Report any large gatherings of crows to officials by calling (812) 244-2709 (cr0w)
- Get volunteers to help with CONTROLLED management methods – shooting pyrotechnics, shining spotlights, and reporting large gatherings.
- The more people helping out, the fewer nights any one person has to be out.
- **Volunteering is a very worthwhile community service – to people & the crows!**

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COALITION
www.lancastercrows.org